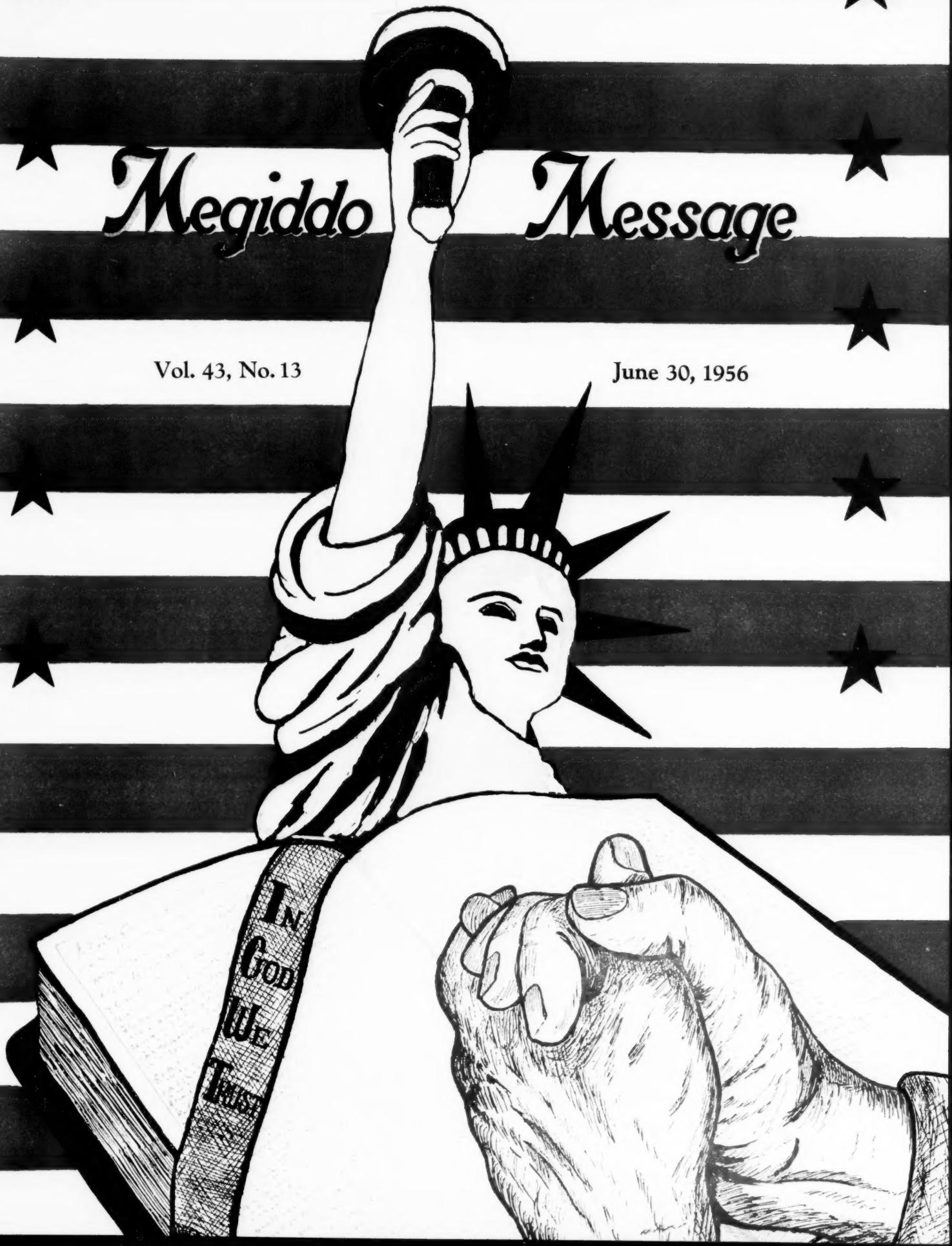


Megiddo Message

Vol. 43, No. 13

June 30, 1956



The Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Watered Seed Grows

Dear Friends:

The Megiddo missionaries surely did leave a true Christian impression with us all. We hope you will make a return trip if we are found worthy. Our doors will be open to any of the brethren from the Mission. We have so much to learn and it is not learned in a day, but by striving and studying daily until the end of our life. We must make ourselves a living sacrifice.

We are very pleased to be found worthy to be in fellowship with the Mission, and we will put forth all efforts in striving to continue in well doing that we may have right to the tree of life.

Hartsville, S. C.

V. S.

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Kearneysville, W. Va. F. O. T.

Great Truths Condensed

Dear Brethren:

I received your little booklet, *The Coming of Jesus and Elijah*, also your sample copy of THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE. I believe God's divine power is upon you, and may it ever continue to be so in the future. I never have seen so much truth in so little space as in your great magazine.

Strange Creek, W. Va.

J. M. B.

Gratitude

Dear Brother:

We are very thankful for all the help so kindly given us through your efforts. Reverend Thatcher gives us very good and inspiring articles in every MESSAGE, also the *Megiddo Bible Lessons*. These stimulate our spiritual growth and are great blessings.

We are having lovely weather these days; it makes us feel better in every way. But being prepared for reverse weather in our lives so that we can rejoice in the Lord in all our trials and seeming difficulties requires much growth.

Toronto, Ontario

Z. M. S.

LIBERTY

Easier were it to hurl the rooted mountain from its base, than force the yoke of slavery upon men determined to be free.

AND so the gracious lady on our Cover, whose great stone arm holds aloft the lighted lamp of liberty, symbolizes that determination in a generation whose honor is sung and discoursed upon by a deeply indebted nation. Religious and civil liberty was their determination, with the attendant blessings of self-government, and freedom to worship God as conscience dictates. To the oppressed peoples of the Old World that liberty was worth suffering, deprivation, and bloodshed. And with unfaltering determination, they achieved their goal.

In this part of the New World, here in the new-found half of the globe, mankind, late in its history, was thus afforded an opportunity to set up a new civilization; here it was strangely privileged to make a new human experiment. Never can the wonder of that unique opportunity fail to excite the emotion of all who consider its strangeness and richness. A thousand fanciful histories of the earth might be contrived without the imagination daring to conceive such a romance as the hiding-away of half of the globe until the fullness of time had come for a new start in civilization.

A mere sea captain's ambition to trace a new trade route gave way to a moral adventure for humanity. The race was to found a new order here on this delectable land. They left for future generations a hemisphere waiting to be touched with new life and new liberty. We have been made recipients of a great benefit. Shall we rest there?

With religious liberty on this new continent, came the freedom to seek the light of Scripture so long obscured by the gross superstition and ignorance of the Old World. Here, beneath the benign beams of the lamp of liberty, the opened Bible was extended that all the world may read. From its pages a whiter, brighter light shone forth, proclaiming a greater, grander liberty to those "determined to be free" indeed. "Ye shall know the truth," is the shining message, "and the truth shall make you free." Truth, then, should lead the way sure and certainly, whereas tradition had, with faltering, flickering light, left men groping and stumbling along to a dead end, as it were, still bound in the shackles of religious error, enslaved to a system doomed to ultimate destruction.

Alas, how slow have been the masses to strike out and follow, how slow to avail themselves of *all* the freedom the "new experiment" affords!

It was God Almighty's leading that directed those hardy, discontented men and women who begat our nation. And He has not failed in His guiding care. He is leading still. It is ours to follow.

Do we wish to be free? Are we determined to cast off the yoke of slavery that binds our fellowmen? True liberty is to break every band of superstition, everything that chains us to the monster—Sin.

Liberty is discipline. There is no liberty which con-

sists in doing as one pleases, or in unrestrainedness of action. A free man of history wrote, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." There is the exercise of knowledge and its power. Knowing that the law of truth and liberty requires the subordination of the mind and body, the man "determined to be free" fully exercises his will in that direction. Not that, "I am brought under by another, a master, a dictator, an owner, by creed, or custom," but, "*I bring under my body.*" There was knowledge of the law of liberty in action. What a liberty to exercise!

Freedom of thought does not mean freedom from thinking. True liberty affords thinking above the masses, of thinking up to the Christ level, not on the things that the small man-enslaved mind is restricted to, to the little things of here and today; but such free thought is expanded on the lofty things of liberty that shall abide in God's Tomorrow and—in Eternity.

In the law of liberty it is *not* written:

whatever is in the political news,
whatever is in the sports news,
whatever is in the fashion news,
whatever is in the stock market news,
whatever is in the current events news;

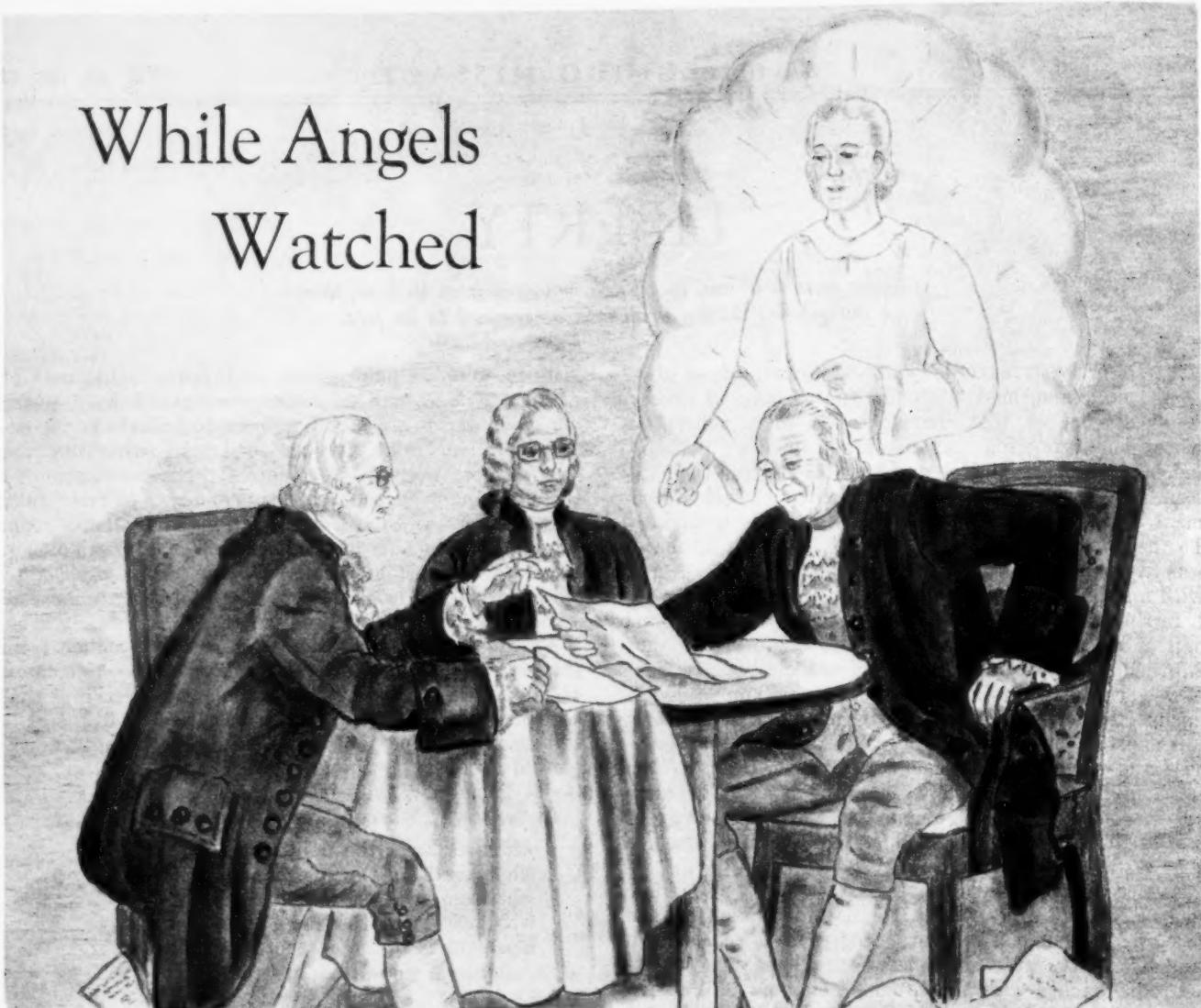
but:

whatever is true,
whatever is honest,
whatever is just,
whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is of good report;
think on THESE things.

Freedom, like knowledge, brings responsibility: the responsibility of placing principle above privilege. If we are so privileged as to know the Truth, we are responsible to perform its mandates. True and precious liberty, then, is responsible to the law and all that the law requires. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Sin is a slave driver to which men and women determined to be really free, revolt with all their mind, might, and strength.

Liberty is a conquest. It does not lie at the beginning of the struggle; it lies at the end; it is the end product of Christianity. The "glorious liberty of the children of God" is to be obtained at the summit of perfection's hill. There the conquering pursuants, having thrust off the shackles of sin and carnality, shall, at last, be able to thrust aside the shackles of mortality with its encumbering pain, sorrow, and tears, its insecurity and fears, to be free forever from the last enslavement, loosed in mind and body to bask in perfect light and perfect liberty through all eternity.

While Angels Watched



Article the third.... Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The reverent student of world history in conjunction with the Holy Scriptures cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that in many a critical period is seen the working of a Power beyond that of ordinary cause and effect, as men know it. And the deeper we go into the matter, the more evident it becomes that this is not imagination or wishful thinking: backward and forward, yesterday, today and forever, Jehovah's hand is upon history, controlling and molding it to His ends. For the sake of His people—a people few in number and not reckoned among the nations—the mightiest empires of earth have been mere pawns on the chess-board of history. To the Christian, history is more than a chronicle of events; it is the fulfillment of a Divine purpose.

When threescore and ten persons, the progenitors of the Chosen People, entered Egypt as famine-refugees, it was more than coincidence that they found a friendly dynasty in control. Their apostasies were punished by heathen invaders who were scourges in the hands of the

Almighty. When their lesson was learned, a deliverer was raised up in the person of Cyrus the Persian, a pagan who knew not the God whose servant he was.

Jehovah's care for His people and His Word runs like a golden thread through all human history, even down to the times with which we feel ourselves to be in contact. The Great Apostasy had extinguished the lamp of truth more than a thousand years previously, in a long, downward swing from Roman civilization to near-barbarism, and mankind had begun the long, painful climb back. The discovery of America and the American Revolution were as much a part of the Eternal's purpose as the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus.

If the prophecies of a renascence of Truth and the perfection of a latter-day "remnant" were to be fulfilled, religious freedom must be established; and this freedom was impossible in the Europe of the eighteenth century. The time was ripe for Divine intervention, unseen and unrecognized, but none the less real.

The following dramatic sketch, or fantasy, reveals the hand of God working in the affairs of men for the furtherance of His designs, the advancement of His truth, and the benefit of His people, a century in advance of the emergence of the true Church from the universal darkness.

The time is September, 1791; the place is New York City, where the Second Congress is in session. It was this Congress, the reader will remember, which gave to us the Bill of Rights, as the first ten Amendments to the Constitution are often called. The Constitution, as originally adopted, was very specific and detailed as to the structure and functions of the government, but said little about the rights of the individual. This omission was noted and felt immediately, and two years later the Constitution was amended to establish and protect these rights, which have meant so much to the world in general, and to the people of God, in particular. It is a critical time for the young republic. It stands at the parting of the ways, so to speak. One road is the well-worn path of Old World ideas and methods; the other is a new way of life, uncertain and untried.

Nations have risen, run their course and fallen, with no Divine guidance or interference. But this is different, for in this new land the way is being prepared for the resurrection of the long-buried Truth. It is in such crises in history that the Eternal, working unseen and unknown through human instruments, takes a hand.

A congressional committee, consisting of Representatives JAMES MADISON, PETER SILVESTER, AND JONATHAN TRUMBULL, is drafting the amendments at a night meeting in MR. MADISON'S apartment.

MADISON: Gentlemen, we have no time to lose. The House should have at least the first four Amendments for consideration tomorrow morning. Article Three is the most controversial, dealing at it does with freedom of speech and religion. We may expect some warm debate, for the idea is strange and new to so many; but I have confidence that it will be adopted.

TRUMBULL: I think we can depend on Mr. Hamilton to question it. He is of the aristocratic party, and aristocracy and establishment always seem to go together. Mr. Burr will probably oppose, for no particular reason, but I hope we can muster enough votes to override him.

SILVESTER: [looking at watch] It is almost time for the Bishop's appointment, is it not? I wonder just what brings him here at this hour.

TRUMBULL: I think I could make a pretty good guess. We shall see if I am right [returning to document]. Now, let's see, where were we? Oh, yes . . . now, Mr. Madison, what stand do you think Maryland will take regarding Number Three?

MADISON: When Roman Catholics are a minority they are firm advocates of tolerance. When they become a majority, it is another story. Fortunately they represent a minority, so I think Maryland will go along.

[Enter SERVANT]

SERVANT: The Most Reverend Bishop Newman, Sir.

MADISON: Show him in at once. [Enter BISHOP]

BISHOP: [after greetings] I believe I am on time, am I not? Night travel is not pleasant in the streets of New York, what with the lack of pavement and poor lighting. If I had not had my servant along with a lantern, I might have drowned in some of the mudholes.

MADISON: Well, Reverend Sir, we hope that some day it will be better. After all, this is in Mr. Silvester's jurisdiction [pauses inquiringly].

BISHOP: Gentlemen, I will state my business at once, as I know you are very busy men. So am I. It is my understanding that certain amendments to the Constitution are under consideration at this session.

SILVESTER: This is true—or, rather, they are being prepared for consideration by Congress.

BISHOP: [earnestly] When the Constitution was adopted two years ago, I, together with my fellow-clergymen, was keenly disappointed that no provision was made for an established religion, supported by the State and recognized as the official church of the United States. To me this is a great and very serious deficiency, and I think I speak the unanimous opinion of the Anglican clergy when I say that I feel very strongly that things will never be right until this is corrected. If a representation of prominent churchmen had been invited to the Constitutional Convention, this would never have been overlooked. It is intolerable, and inconceivable, that the United States of America should be a stronghold of disestablishmentarianism. That is a powerful word, Gentlemen, but a very dangerous one. Therefore, knowing that amendments are planned, this seemed the opportune time for me to urge upon you this sacred duty.

MADISON: Well, my dear Bishop, by a strange coincidence we were discussing this very point when you arrived. Now just what reasons can you give us for taking such a stand? As representatives of the people we can do nothing, you know, without good reason.

BISHOP: Reasons, my good sirs? Some things are so obvious that they require no reason. But if you insist, it is a universal and time-honored custom. It is the only decent and proper thing to do; it has always been done, and by the most highly civilized nations of Europe. Are we, a newborn country, wiser than they?

TRUMBULL: I certainly hope so. The fact that a thing has always been done is no reason at all. Have you never heard of such a thing as progress? As for these highly civilized nations of Europe, it was to get away from their abuses and oppressions that our forefathers left their comfortable homes and came to this wilderness.

SILVESTER: This is a new thing we are doing in America, a new sort of Government—you might say—of the people, for the people, and by the people; not for the benefit of any special class or creed. We have broken with the past; let us bury it decently and proceed to make ourselves a better future.

BISHOP: Apparently you do not agree with me. I am unable to understand why. After all, I speak as an expert in religious matters, which have not been your special study. I have always considered that a nation without an established religion can never obtain the blessings of Heaven or be assured of Divine protection. *I believe the history of the world will bear me out.*

MADISON: That is your opinion, Sir, but I question your ability to prove it. To me, history reveals that established churches can degenerate into mere tools of the State, or they can become dangerously powerful in their own right. Almost invariably they become intolerant and resort to persecution of one kind or another. The conduct of established churches has often been such that they deserved the wrath of God, rather than His blessings. This is a strong statement, and I make it as a member of your own denomination. I am mentioning no names or places or dates, although I could do so.

BISHOP: But our Mother Country with her official

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church, has prospered greatly. Where better can we look for a pattern?

SILVESTER: The recent war proves that she can be in the wrong. The link between church and state placed the established Church in the position of making active war against us. And even with such help, the Mother Country was defeated, and at the hands of a little colonial people who are, fortunately or unfortunately, without a State church. You'll have to do better, my lord Bishop.

BISHOP: [pacing floor in agitation] But, gentlemen of Congress, can you not see where all this will lead us? With nothing recognized as official, with no national standard, as you might say, the way is opened to every sort of superstition, to every crazy notion, and the end will be utter confusion. It will mean religious anarchy, and the spread of atheism. An irreligious government can never have the support of its own people or the respect of the world. President Washington has said privately that our new nation cannot endure without the influence of religion. Certainly he must have *had in mind something definite and familiar*.

MADISON: Such as . . . ?

BISHOP: [definitely and defiantly] Such as an established church. Remember, my friends, our serious weakness. The United States is in no condition, politically or financially, to survive any more disorder than we have now. We are surrounded by jealous enemies. They are strong. We are weak. Our government needs all the support it can get; above all, it needs the help and guiding hand of a strong and experienced Church.

TRUMBULL: Well, gentlemen, I am inclined to think that perhaps Bishop Newman has a point. Above all things we want order: in fact, we cannot afford to have disorder in our present condition of weakness; and religious disorder might prove as bad as any other kind. What do you think about it?

SILVESTER: [thoughtfully] Maybe you're right, Mr. Trumbull. There might be a compromise of some kind made, so as to give full freedom but retain the benefits of a well-known religion in official circles. What is your opinion, Mr. Madison?

[The ANGEL enters]

MADISON: [slowly, after serious thought] Well, of course, the government ought to be an example to the people. . . . I hadn't really thought of it in that light before. I had hoped we might get along without it, but if there is no other way to do it, an established church might be the lesser of two evils. [He picks up the document before him and reaches for pen. The ANGEL, though unseen by the men, stands near by.]

BISHOP: [eagerly, following up his advantage] Of course, I have not read the amendment as you have prepared it, but I would be glad to assist in drafting one which would, I am certain, be acceptable to the majority and be for the welfare of our nation.

MADISON: [laying down pen] No. . . . I'm sorry, Bishop Newman, but this will require more study. Now let me ask you a pointed question. If Congress should approve the establishment of religion, which church would you suggest as the favored instrument?

BISHOP: [beaming] Why, our own, to be sure.

SILVESTER: Why?

BISHOP: Why? Why not?

SILVESTER: Why so?

BISHOP: As I said before, some things are so obvious as to be axiomatic. Our Church is the oldest, of course . . .

MADISON: Not older than that of the Maryland Catholics.

TRUMBULL: Nor of the German and Swedish Lutherans of Pennsylvania and Delaware.

SILVESTER: Nor the Calvinism of my Dutch ancestors.

BISHOP: Of course, of course, but they really do not count—Papists and Europeans. After all, ours is an Anglo-Saxon culture and tradition, as in the mother country, and *our church is best fitted to carry on that tradition*.

[SILVESTER bristles, but is restrained by TRUMBULL]

MADISON: My understanding, as we told you before, is that we have broken with tradition. In the name of justice, why not establish the Puritans of Massachusetts? Surely no sect has done more for our Republic. Or the Quakers—they have many excellent qualities.

BISHOP: But President Washington is a member of our communion, and his opinion should have weight.

TRUMBULL: Would you be willing to interview the President and find out just what his opinions are on this subject? Then we would have it direct.

BISHOP: [Backing up] Why, I hardly think it would be advisable just now. They say he has quite a temper, and I am afraid he might resent it, inasmuch as I am not a member of Congress or of this committee. Perhaps it would be better if one of you would do it.

MADISON: Well, Bishop Newman, what other reasons have you to offer?

BISHOP: [heatedly] It all boils down to just this, gentlemen: we are right, and they are wrong. We must not establish error or give it official sanction. Tolerate other churches if you must, but at least do not place them on the same plane as the one true Church.

SILVESTER: [warmly] This sounds, sir, like the voice of Rome! This is the very spirit of intolerance which led to the Reformation and the founding of our Western world.

BISHOP: [angrily] Mr. Silvester, I resent your comparison. The dignity of my church will not permit me to accept this insult.

SILVESTER: Nor will my sense of duty to my country and the principles of freedom upon which it is founded permit me to accept your protest!

MADISON: Gentlemen, gentlemen, this is not the time or the place for personalities. Let us all be calm, for the issue is serious. Let me say this, Most Reverend Bishop: it is my conviction that freedom for all, tolerance for all, and special privileges for none, will result in growth for all. Who of us can say that all truth dwells with him or his particular church? It may be that from this fusion of many faiths and creeds will some day emerge a new and better religion. Let us not blindly worship the past or the *status quo*, but seek for truth wherever it may be found. If this calls for change, let us not be afraid of change.

TRUMBULL: It is my opinion, after considering the matter, that if a church cannot hold its own without the support and favoritism of the State, it deserves to fail.

BISHOP: This is very dangerous heresy, but your blood be upon your own heads. Now here is something, gentlemen, which perhaps you have not considered. [very impressively, almost dramatically] If you will think seriously of it, it will strike fear into your hearts. In Europe today are millions of Papists. Their countries are poor and overcrowded. Some day they will be clamoring at our gates. Their hordes of immigrants will be our future citizens. Their first allegiance is to the Pope, and an established church is the normal and natural thing to them. In a few years, by their votes they could deliver this whole country up to Rome—and they will do it, too. And then where will our hard-won liberties be? [very

dramatically] Think that over, gentlemen, and act accordingly before it is too late.

TRUMBULL: [startled] Bishop! Don't frighten us like that. That is really something to think about. [Others nod gravely].

BISHOP: [following up] Now I don't want the Inquisition in America, any more than you do, and the only way to stop it is to have an organization strong enough to keep it out—a Church which serves as the good right arm of the State. Now here is my suggestion. You seem to be unalterably opposed to the establishment of the Anglican Church—for what possible reason I cannot conceive. If you insist upon democratic procedures, let a general election be called, in which the people may state their preferences directly. The church receiving a majority or plurality of votes will become the official church of the United States. All the rest would receive toleration but no State support. Then we would at least have order and a familiar condition with which to live. I am confident that there are enough good Anglo-Saxons in the country to—

[ANGEL has again entered and stands by delegates.]

SILVESTER: Just a moment, Bishop. You are not playing this thing fair. You are giving the people only a choice between churches. Why not let them decide whether or not they want an established church at all?

BISHOP: [in some confusion] Why, I hardly think that would be wise. The people are not ready for such momentous decisions. Their heads are still a bit turned by political independence.

MADISON: [decisively] As chairman of this committee, Bishop Newman, this is our answer: With all due respect to your position, your suggestions are unacceptable. This is not a matter to be decided either by Rome or Canterbury. The people are speaking and will speak. As representatives of the people of the United States, we draft these amendments, which I prefer to call the Bill of Rights. Then the people, through their representatives in the various state legislatures, must ratify them if they are to be adopted. So you see there is to be no compulsion. If the people really desire an established religion, they will simply reject this amendment, which I will now read to you in the form in which it goes before Congress tomorrow morning.

"ARTICLE THREE: CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES."*

It is my deep conviction that our highest welfare and safety lie in the absolute and permanent separation of Church and State. It may be a new and untried idea, but I believe God will prosper our efforts to build a better world on this basis. If we are successful, I believe it will have its effect for good in the Mother Country, and even in the whole world. To follow your suggestion would be to go backward.

BISHOP: Then this is final?

MADISON: This is final.

BISHOP: [angrily] Perhaps you think so. But at the next election we shall see. Some of you will be up for

re-election, and you will find, sir, that our people also vote!

MADISON: [with self-control and courtesy, but with a cold decision] You will pardon me, Bishop, but our time is valuable, and the hour is late. May we consider the interview closed? James! [enter SERVANT] James, please have Bishop Newman's lantern-bearer prepare to escort him home. [exit SERVANT] I bid you good-night, most reverend Bishop [bows him out].

TRUMBULL: I was quite correct in my surmise, it seems. I thought it would be something like this.

SILVESTER: More and more I am convinced that we are working under the guidance of Almighty God, who is keeping us clear of these pitfalls.

MADISON: Amen. But we have lost too much time. Now to get back to work. Read us your draft of Article Four, Mr. Trumbull.

[Curtain drops as TRUMBULL prepares to read while ANGEL stands with hands extended over group.]

The two following essays were prepared and delivered by students of the Megiddo Mission School at the closing exercises, June 7.

CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION means the wise use of things. Among certain Government experts there is a great deal of talk about conservation.

The warm sunshine and spring rains melt the snow which floods the rivers and carries away the soil. Much of this could be prevented by proper precaution. Tons of soil are washed down rivers each year. Much of the soil washed down hills could be saved by planting grass or forests. If a farmer's land is hilly, he should plow around the hill, making ditches to hold the water. He should not in any case plow up and down a hill, because this makes perfect run-ways for the water.

The flooding of rivers which washes away soil could be stopped with dams which would hold back the rapid flow of water or slow it down. Water in some places is scarce. Dams would hold it for use at other times and in other places.

Erosion costs money, eight hundred and forty-four million dollars a year. Each year enough soil is washed or blown away to fill a freight train that would reach around the world eighteen times!

In the Midwest terrible wind storms blow much of the top soil from the ground. This is man's fault. Too many cattle and sheep were grazed on the land, and they took off the protective covering of grass. As there is not much rain in the Midwest, the wind dries the soil quickly, then blows it away. The soil piles in cities, by fences, houses, barns, and just wastes. Here again this could be prevented by planting grass and trees which would hold the water. We need good soil to grow food for us and our livestock.

Conservation is a big problem, and soil is not the only thing involved. We must conserve our time, our talents, using all to the glory of God; nothing must be wasted. We must be careful that we plant only good things in our

* A total of twelve Articles were drafted for consideration. The last ten were ratified by the state legislatures to become the Bill of Rights. Thus the proposed Article Three pertaining to freedom of speech and of religion became Amendment One in the Bill of Rights.

minds. We must build dams to conserve the crystal-clear water of truth.

We also must be careful how we till the soil, lest our minds grow careless, we make run-ways, and all the water of truth is washed away. This is wasting strength. It is defying God's principles of conservation. Demas did this. He plowed up and down in the world, until finally Paul said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

Solomon started to till his soil and at first he humbly asked for directions as to how to keep his life rich and fertile; but later he began to plant strange slips from Egypt, and his soil soured. His trees of right doing grew more and more spindly and he allowed the water of truth to become polluted with outlandish customs.

Jeremiah tells about people who do not plow, till, and water properly. "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done."

After Paul was shown that his own way was polluting the water and destroying the soil, he was *immediately obedient to the heavenly vision*. He knew he had no time to lose. Whereupon he began to till his soil in God's way, and promptly forgot the past. He said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He was strong to do his tilling and watering in the right way.

When Jesus was just a little boy, His mother taught Him how to conserve His soil properly. He did not always do right, because He had to learn to refuse the evil and choose the good (Isa. 7:15). But when once Jesus understood God's law on a given point, He did not transgress again.

Brother Nichols' parents taught him error for truth, but he soon realized that this would result in erosion of the soil. To avoid that, he searched the Scriptures for God's method of conservation. He did not allow himself to be tempted by his schoolmates to do wrong. He bravely stood for truth and right, though all the religious world stood against him. He did not ruin his mind by reading things he did not want to remember. His everyday life was an example of the abundance of rich fruit which grows when we allow the soil to be tilled and watered by God.

When God's Kingdom is set up, it will be given to all those who recognize God's way of conservation as the best way, and who, recognizing His methods as best, employ them in their daily lives, allowing none of their energies to be wasted, but preserving all life's resources for His service.

Just as natural conservation cannot be brought about by one person but is everybody's problem, so God's Kingdom on earth will come to pass by all interested and faithful ones practicing true conservation in obeying God's laws. So won't you help?

"Stop and consider the past; look at the future; find wherein you lack; then go to work with a will, and the task can readily and easily be accomplished. Live for Christ; have a love for the home in glory."

The Glow that Counts

THREE was once a man who could hold a light bulb in his hand and make it glow. But for most of us, light bulbs will not glow unless they are connected to a live circuit. Likewise, stained glass windows have no beauty unless there is some light shining through them. And it takes sunlight to produce a rainbow; it cannot happen in the dark.

These physical facts demonstrate a similar spiritual law. Men's lives do not shine by their own light; they need God's light shining through them.

Have you ever realized that if you walk toward the light you see no shadow? The man who walks toward the light leaves the darkness behind him. It is only when we turn away from the source of light that we experience the shadows.

Spiritually, this world needs a tremendous amount of illumination; but mankind has turned away from the Almighty Source of light, therefore cannot be enlightened. They choose the feeble light of human reasoning, and reject the bright light of Divine Intelligence; thus the man walking in the light of his own spark cannot make much of a glow.

Cold righteousness never warms lives until it is first warmed by love. And the love of God is to keep His commandments. Our goodness becomes truly good only when it becomes God-ness — when God's goodness shines through.

Many people look at life through dark glasses and then complain about it. They blame everything on their circumstances. They point the accusing finger at others and say it is their malice or stupidity which makes the world dark. While the truth of the matter is that the fault lies in themselves. The next time you feel like complaining about the dark world in which you live, try forcing a cheerful thought into your mind. It cannot help but improve the outlook.

The light of truth will shine out through us only as we live it out. Therefore it is evident that we must let truth work effectually within to cleanse and purify us from evil. The light will not shine if evil is working its contaminating influence within us. But if we cease all works of the flesh and conform our lives to the principles of truth, the light will shine out through us, growing brighter and brighter unto that perfect day.

It requires a great deal of effort on our part to keep the light brightly burning at all times. We must let God's Word guide and direct our actions every waking moment by putting it into actual practice in all our daily affairs; then the light of truth will shine out to others, causing them to glorify God.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." We shall gain the promised rest, the eternal home, if we walk as children of light.

To shine as lights in this dark world, we must be of that nation professing holiness. We must eliminate every thought of substituting the sparks which we have kindled for that which is genuine. Our own spark, though flourished aloft, soon fades and becomes a part of the darkness. This is not a shining light.

(Continued on page 11)

Musings of the Editor

I HAVE been thinking much of late about taking God into all our plans. Oh, how many we make and have made, and He has been left out. Yet we expect that someday He will take us into His eternal plan when He fills the earth with Israel, His glory.

Upon our beds, oftentimes before the day breaks, we begin to make and formulate our plans. Do we take God into them, or is He left out? Do we let Him into our deals, our sales, our purchases; into every realm and aspect of life? Why do we refrain from taking God into all our plans? There can be but one answer. We think that we do not need Him, that we can handle the plan better alone; that some choice plan of ours might be upset by letting Him in, or we would have to give Him all the glory if the plan proved successful.

Paul says that we are laborers together with God. How can He labor with us or we with Him if we do not take Him into all our plans? God has promised to supply all our needs in Christ Jesus, but how can He fulfill that promise if He is left out of our plans?

Solomon, when little in his own sight, was anxious to take God into every move and plan he made, but presently he began to make his own plans and leave God out. How soon he became a dismal failure and brought ruin and destruction upon himself. Judas, on that dark night, now centuries in the past, departed from the Lord's table to carry out his own plans. How bitter the ending.

We might think that such a deed or plan would be far from us. True, we may not face the temptation to betray the personal Christ. But remember, when we are false to the principles of truth which Christ upheld, we are betraying Him; we are leaving the table of the Lord, entering a world of darkness, and laying plans of our own to betray Him. Every time we formulate a plan and leave God out we are the loser, for the plan from the beginning is bound to be a failure.

What a wonderful example we have in Moses, the great Lawgiver! When asked for his plans for Israel's guidance and welfare, he said, "I will go and inquire of the Lord." How exceedingly careful he was to take God into all his plans!

When Jesus was confronted and His authority questioned by the Jews, He said unto them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." They soon realized that He and His Father were working together on the same plans. Then Jesus answered and said unto them, "Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth."

Men have allowed an ever-enlarging program of temporal affairs to force the Creator to recede in their consciousness and to have no part in their plans. He is thought to be useful only when some great tragedy occurs. Men eat, drink, plant, reap, and do business without giving a thought to God. We forget that we are only the

sowers and planters of the seed, the cultivators of the soil, and that the increase comes from God.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." If we believe there is such a present help so near at hand, why do we attempt to struggle on alone with our plans and purposes? "Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him." Do not think of making a plan or of carrying out a purpose without Him. Take Him into all your plans. He will willingly labor with you if you let Him. Just think of being yoked together with God, He in one end of the yoke and we in the other! What strength and help there is in such a combination! What plan or purpose can fail with such a Mastermind working with us!

Men like to make plans and hew out cisterns of their own, but they are only broken and empty. Such products are the result of God being left out of the design and plan. At the beginning of his kingship Saul let God help him in all his plans for the defense of Israel. But when he launched a campaign of his own, it brought his downfall and ruin. "O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth," cried the Prophet.

If we want life in all its fullness, God must be taken into our plans. Paul, the Apostle to us Gentiles, emphasized the relationship of every Christian with God when he said, "We then as workers together with him." Think of God being willing to work with us poor mortal creatures of the dust! Paul did not leave God out of his plans. Although his life began with a failure by his persecuting the churches, it turned to a glorious triumph.

One might ask how it is possible to take God into every plan? "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." First there must be a committal. This is not easy, for we often think our way, method or procedure is best. Even after we make the committal, we often hesitate, thinking God's plan to be faulty. Perhaps we think the ark is being sent over too rough a road and is in danger of upsetting. *God makes no mistakes.* Why do we hesitate to take Him into all our plans?

With God's mercy still extended to us, let us from now on take Him into all our plans. Then in that soon-coming Day He will let us help Him unfold to this sin-sick world the eternal plan of the ages.

"What a blessed thought that God will not lay up our iniquities against us! He will remember our sins no more, will not put them on the balances. He will simply cast our evil far away if we but turn and serve Him. He will not forsake His people for His great Name's sake, if they will not forsake Him."

"What fools we are if we do not work with all our might and strength for such a Home where all shall be joy, nothing to mar our happiness! It would seem we could do anything to gain a home in Eternity. And such a Home God has promised those who love and serve Him."

"That wonderful life held out to us, where there shall be no trials, trouble, or death, should cause us to live every day, hour, and minute in the fear of our Lord and Master."

Meditations

On the Word

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15: 3).

Physical or material cleanliness is a necessity; heart cleanliness is a virtue. The Psalmist sought for help to attain this mental purity. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (51: 2, 7, 10). David applied at the Source of all purity for aid. This washing was not like the washing of the hands, but like the washing of clothes; not like the washing of a surface, but the removal of uncleanness from a fabric, the ousting of every germ lurking in the innermost fiber.

This was the cleanliness of which our Master spoke: a cleansing without and especially within, a cleansing of motives, purposes, thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. The very atmosphere of a heart so cleansed will be as the air after deluges of cleansing rain. It will be sweet and clean and clear.

This heart-cleansing is made possible through the words of life which Jesus spoke. During His ministry He proclaimed the law of faith which His life and the lives of the former prophets exemplified. It was this same law of purity of which we read in Psalm 19: 8, 9, "The commandment of the Lord is pure,.... The fear of the Lord is *clean*." This "*fear of the Lord is to hate evil*" (Prov. 8: 13), to despise uncleanness in all its forms, even when it is present in ourselves.

We are told to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" (II Cor. 7: 1). But a person has to be attracted by this law of holiness; he has to want to become pure. There is no task more difficult than trying to help a man who thinks he doesn't need help, even though his need may be extreme. You may throw a blanket over a horse's head and take it out of a burning stable, or a lasso over a steer's head to get it where you want, but human beings cannot be handled that way. They must be led. The tether that draws must be fastened inside their will.

When a man is too impure in his ingrained ideas to receive any conception of what purity means, there is little possibility of helping him to become clean. When he is content in the gutter, when even his eyes cannot be lifted over the curbstone, how is he ever to rise to the highlands. A man never turns from the filthiness of sin's acting until he sees and feels its vileness to the sickening point. Uncleanness of mind cannot be daubed over, whitewashed, patched up, or mended. It must be cleansed "by the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5: 26).

Uncleanness of the inner man is not always visible, but it leaves its stain upon the soul.

Stagnant pools harbor filth and foulness. Without this vital purifier—the water of life—coursing through our minds, we, too, are stagnant, with an unhealthy mental state. Alas, our minds are too often clogged by the rub-

bish with which we load our memories. It may take the form of petty jealousies, envy, foolish memories, evil imaginations, conceit, or self-love. In short, *we are encumbered with too much clay*.

How can the pure, fresh water of life flow through our lives if we allow an accumulation of the filthiness of the flesh, this clay, this earth, to encumber us and clog up the channel? "Wash thine heart from wickedness," comes the command from the Divine Cleanser. Thus this purifying, purging, filtering process continues in every part of us, removing all the blur and opacity. Our clay encumbrances are filtered away and we begin to feel and to know the beauty of holiness. The mud wall grows transparent; our senses lose their obtuseness, become refined and keener; and we live not only deeper but closer to the Author of holiness.

The Apostles were attracted to this life of selfless purity by the perfect example of their Master. Here was a Man whose every word and act was powerful. There was a cleansing force, a purifying power in His every word; strength and immunity in His actions. To be near Him was to feel the same vitalizing strain of faith and hope flowing through their own veins. To hear Him speak was to fill their hearts with a great longing desire to grasp and retain the ultimate—His standard of holiness. To observe His meekness and humility as He wended His way among men was to strike condemnation to the self-seekers. To note His fearlessness in denouncing self-righteousness and hypocrisy was to provoke a deep thoughtfulness and the soul-searching, "Lord, is it I?" Here was the cleansing process at its working best.

In no less powerful form do the Master's words span the centuries and speak to us: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

A leper, all filthy and vile,
Once came to a prophet of old,
To be healed by his marv'lous pow'r,
Bringing treasures, silver and gold.
What were the words of the prophet?
They teach us a lesson, I ween.
"Go dip seven times in Jordan."
Go wash in pure water, be clean.

As Jesus was passing along,
A blind beggar sat by the way,
Whose vision had never beheld
The glorious light of the day.
The Master, with loving pity
For the one who sat there alone,
Anointing his eyes said kindly,
"Go wash in the pool of Siloam."

If you find in your heart of flesh
The vile, leprous spottings of sin,
Go dip seven times in Jordan,
Go wash in the word and be clean.
Obedience to God's holy law
Is the truest of offerings seen.
'Tis the Lord's chosen sacrifice,
To wash in the word and be clean.

We may cleanse the sin-cankering sore
Of our flesh at the fountain head,
If we but follow the Master
And do all the words He has said.
Is life's way o'er-clouded and dark?
And with doubts and fears are you rent?
Then fly to the fountain of life,
Go wash in the word that is sent.

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL

PERSONAL

CURRENT



Do you have a question? Personal replies will be sent to Biblical questions to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

Please explain Jesus' meaning when He assured the woman at Simon's house that her faith had saved her (Luke 7: 50). What salvation was this—certainly not eternal salvation?

It could not have been eternal salvation, for that is given only to those who endure to the end (Matt. 10: 22), who form perfect characters by a "patient continuance in well doing" (Romans 2: 7). Jesus, having power to read the woman's heart, saw that her repentance was sincere. This was the hour of her covenant, the turning-point of her life. Her past sins were therefore forgiven, and would not stand against her in the Judgment. It was from these old sins and her old way of life that her faith had saved her; eternal salvation, or immortal life, would be determined by her future conduct.

A similar usage occurs in Luke 19 which records the case of Zacchaeus who entertained Jesus upon His passage through Jericho. Jesus said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house." Eternal salvation was not secured, but the *way* to salvation was opened to him.

Also Paul informed the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31). It was the point of *conversion* in the jailor's life, and not *salvation*. Salvation would follow at Judgment if his belief proved genuine.

How did Christ suffer for the unjust, as stated in I Peter 3: 18?

First Peter 2: 21 informs us that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Christ's work was not that of a human-divine redemptive sacrifice, or blood atonement, but the Perfect Example. It was of necessity for the benefit of the unjust; for all men are unjust by nature. He said that He "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Self-righteousness there was; in all ages it is in abundance; but not one man or woman is righteous before God by nature (Romans 3: 10). This saving righteousness is developed by following Christ's example in doing all the commandments of the law of God (Deut. 6: 25).

The Apostle Paul commanded: "Come out from the world and be ye separate." To what extent is this to be done?

As Jesus said of His disciples, we are to be in the world but not of it (John 17: 15). We cannot isolate ourselves and thus escape everything, but while living in the world we are to have no part in their affairs, social, religious, or political. The Lord did not and does not want His people to become entangled with the affairs of this life and thus forget their higher and nobler calling. Living in the world, we must bear the tidings of the Kingdom of God to the world, for among them are some who hunger and thirst for the Word of God. As long as our day of salvation lasts we must perform this duty.

We must, of necessity, earn our livelihood; and legitimate business or employment is honorable.

The great weight of Paul's admonition is that we must forsake the greed, selfishness, pride, sinful pleasures and frivolities of the world; not to conform to it in conduct or conversation.

June 30, 1956

Please explain about the dying thief on the cross.

Luke 23: 43, the verse in question, is wanting in many of the earliest manuscripts (2d century), and ignored by several of the early Church Fathers who might have been expected to cite it. (See footnote, Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*.) However, if it is genuine, it does not promise salvation to the thief, for that would be a contradiction of the whole moral law, and specifically of the assurance of Paul that "neither thieves . . . nor revilers . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6: 10). This unsavory character was both a thief and a reviler (Matt. 27: 44).

Note that the thief did not ask to be taken to heaven that day, but to be remembered "when thou comest." Jesus answered him by a question: "Verily I say unto thee today, Shalt thou be with me in paradise?" A question can and often does have the force of a negative assertion, depending on the context, as in Genesis 4: 9, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The absence of punctuation is the fault of the translators; there is no punctuation in the original Greek. Jesus did not wait until His coming but informed the thief that his repentance had come too late.

If salvation were promised to the thief, and if death-bed repentance be possible, then such texts as Jeremiah 13: 16, 23 are meaningless, and we have anarchy in the Scriptures instead of harmony.

Who are the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 14: 1?

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (v. 4).

The plan of salvation as revealed in the Bible provides for two periods of probation, or days of salvation, for the development of two classes. The first period is six thousand years in duration, and in all that time only a choice few, 144,000 to be exact, will fully comply with Divine law and complete their course successfully. These are the "kings and priests" who shall sit with Jesus on His throne and "reign on the earth" (Rev. 5: 9, 10; 3: 21).

The second period is the Millennium, or Sabbath of rest, a glorious era of a thousand years in which the devil—all evil—shall be bound and a vast multitude developed to be the subjects of the Kingdom of God (Rev. 7: 9—15).

These are the two "seeds" promised to Abraham through Isaac—the rulers—and Ishmael—the subjects.

THE GLOW THAT COUNTS

(Continued from page 8)

The true light sheds its beams from a heart that is pure. Evil has no lodging place within the abode of holiness. If the darkness is present, the light cannot shine out. It is eclipsed by the evil.

Is our light brightly burning? Are we radiating true Christianity to brighten the way for others? We must never bank our fire, allowing it to become dim. If this happens, let us not watch the embers die out, but rather stir them to new brilliance.

May we stimulate this zeal of ours, attain and maintain that spiritual glow, so that our light may blaze forth as the morning sun for all to see.

The War Inevitable

A transcription of Patrick Henry's fiery speech before the Provincial Convention of Virginia, 1775, adapting it to the Christian's battle against the flesh.

They tell us, Sir, that we are weak, unable to cope with so formidable an adversary as the flesh. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed? when discouragement, faithlessness and evil habits are more fortified to deter and defeat us every time we attempt to fulfill our sacred vows to God? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of heaven has placed in our power.

However small our numbers, when armed with the sword of the Spirit, protected by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left in the cause of liberty from the flesh, and with a hope such as we have of living in a better Country, we are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us.

Besides, Sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. "Behold, God himself is with us for our Captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets, to cry alarm against us." He alone is master over our destinies, and will raise up friends to fight our battles with us.

The battle, Sir, is not to the strong alone: it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, Sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. We have agreed to serve our God and shall one day stand and be judged for what we have done. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery to sin, and a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." If our chains are being forged daily so their clanking can be vividly heard, it is our own carelessness and indifference that is forging them. The fight with sin is real, but it must go on. The war is inevitable; and let it come! I repeat, Sir, let it come!

It is vain, Sir, to extenuate the matter. The flesh may cry, Peace! Peace! but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next wind of trial that sweeps across our path will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that Christians wish? What would they have? Are the things of this life so dear, or peace with the flesh so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains of slavery to sin and ultimate destruction? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others will take; but as for me, I will fight on! Great is the combat, divine is the work; it is for freedom, it is for happiness, it is for holiness, it is for LIFE!